

13. A. 7
CORIOLANUS:

OR, THE
ROMAN MATRON.

A

TRAGEDY.

Altered

Taken from SHAKESPEARE and THOMSON,

by Mr T. Sheridan

As it is Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

To which is added,

The ORDER of the OVATION.

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Advertisement.

THE person who undertook to alter, and adapt the following piece to the stage, did it with a view to preserve to the theatre two characters which seemed to be drawn in as masterly a manner as any that came from the pen of the inimitable *Shakespeare*. These he found were likely to be admired in the closet only ; for the play, in general, seemed but ill calculated for representation. Upon examining a play of *Thomson's* upon the same subject, tho' he saw great beauties in it, he could not but perceive that it was defective in some essential points, and must always appear tedious in the acting. From a closer view of both, he thought they might mutually assist one another, and each supply the other's wants. *Shakespeare's* play was purely historical, and had little or no plot. *Thomson's* plot was regular, but too much of the epic kind, and wanted business. He thought, by blending these, a piece might be produced, which, tho' not perfect, might furnish great entertainment to, and keep up the attention of an audience. The success it has met with in both kingdoms (for it was first performed on the *Dublin* stage) has more than answered his expectation.

And he has good reason to hope that he has been the means of adding one play to the stock, which is likely to live in any company, where the characters of *Coriolanus* and *Veturia* can be properly supported.

As the military entry in this play, representing a *Roman* Ovation, has been universally admired, it is judged not unnecessary, for the use of such as are not acquainted with the *Roman* customs, to give the following

ADVERTISEMENT.

ing account of that ceremony, together with the order of the procession, as it was exhibited at the Theatre-royal in *Covent-garden*.

Ovation was a lesser sort of triumph. It had its name from *ovis*, a sheep, which was sacrificed on this occasion, instead of a bull, used in the great triumph. The ovation was granted upon any extraordinary success against the enemy, in gaining a battle, taking a town, some remarkable exploit, or making an advantageous peace to *Rome*. But a triumph was never obtained, unless a kingdom was entirely subdued, and added to the *Roman* territories. They differed in form from each other principally in this, that in the Ovation all marched on foot, but in the triumph the victor was carried in a chariot drawn by horses, and followed by horse-men, which makes the representation of the latter, on the stage, impracticable.

Underneath is the order of the Ovation, as it was exhibited.

But, previous to that, there was a civil procession from the town, consisting of Priests, Flamens, Choiristers, Senators, Tribunes, Virgins, Matrons, and the Mother, Wife, and Child of *Coriolanus*. These walked to the sound of flutes and soft instruments, and lined the way to behold the military entry, and congratulate the victor. The Ovation was performed to the sound of drums, fifes and trumpets, in the following order.

The

The Order of the OVATION.

Six Lictors.

One carrying a small Eagle.

Six Incense-bearers.

Four Souldiers.

Two Fifes.

One Drum.

Two Standard-bearers.

Ten Souldiers.

Two Fifes.

One Drum.

Two Standard-bearers.

Six Souldiers.

Two Standard-bearers.

Four Serpent Trumpets.

Four carrying a Bier with Gold and Silver Vases,
Part of the Spoil.

Two Souldiers.

Two Standard-bearers.

Two Souldiers.

Four carrying another Bier with a large Urn and
Four Vases.

Four Souldiers carrying a Bier loaden with Trophies,
Armour, Ensigns, &c. taken from the Enemy.

Five Souldiers with mural and civick Crowns.

Four Captive Generals in Chains.

One carrying a small Eagle.

Twelve Lictors preceding the two Consuls.

M. MINUCIUS. C. COMINIUS.

CORIO LANUS.

A Standard-bearer,
with a Drawing of
Corioli.

Another Standard-bearer,
with the name of *Corioli*
wrote on the Banner.

Two carrying a large Eagle.

Four Standard-bearers.

Twelve Souldiers.

In the military Proceſſion alone, independent of the Civil,
there were an hundred and eighteen perſons.

Dramatis

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

CORIO LANUS,
 M. MINUCIUS,
 COMINIUS,
 MENENIUS,
 SICINIUS,
 BRUTUS,
 1 } Senators,
 2 }
 ÆDILE,
 1 }
 2 }
 3 } Plebeians
 4 }
 5 }
 Officer
 TULLUS,
 GALEsus,
 VOLUSIUS,
 TITUS
 HERALD,

Mr. Sheridan. *Humble*
 Mr. Anderson.
 Mr. Ridout. *Adkins*
 Mr. Skuter. *Baddeley*
 Mr. Bennett. *Barrymore*
 Mr. Stevens.
 Mr. Redman.
 Mr. Wignell.
 Mr. Hurst.
 Mr. Barrington. *Swett*
 Mr. Collins. *Burton*
 Mr. Dunstall. *Fawcett*
 Mr. Stoppelaar. *Jones*
 Mr. Costello.
 Mr. Holtom. *Phillips*
 Mr. Ryan. *Wroughton*
 Mr. Gibson.
 Mr. Sparks. *Williamson*
 Mr. Cushing.
 Mr. White.

W O M E N.

Virgilia
Aloria
 VETURIA,
 VOLUMNIA,
 LADY.

Mrs. Farmer
 Mrs. Woffington. *Magg*
 Mrs. Bellamy. *Siddons*
 Mrs. Helms.

Miss Sidwell

Roman & Volscian Senators, Lictors
 Soldiers, Citizens &c
 Scene partly at Rome & partly in the Territories of the Volsci



CORIOLANUS:

OR, THE

ROMAN MATRON.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter VETURIA and VOLUMNIA.

VETURIA.

I Pray you, daughter, sing, or exprefs yourself in a more comfortable fort: If my son were my husband, I would freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour, than in the endearments of his bed, where he would shew most love. When yet he was but tender-bodied, and the only son of my womb; when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way; when, for a day of king's entreaties, a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding; I, considering how honour would become such a person, that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir, was pleas'd to let him seek danger, where he was like to find fame: To a cruel war I sent him, from whence he return'd, his brows

B

bound

bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child, than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

VOLUMNIA.

But had he died in the business, madam; how then?

VETURIA.

Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely: Had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike; and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather eleven die nobly for their country, than one voluptuously surfeit, out of action.

VOLUMNIA.

Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself.

VETURIA.

Indeed, thou shalt not:

Methinks, I hither hear your husband's drum:
I see him pluck Aufidius down by th' hair:
(As children from a bear) the Volsci shunning him:
Methinks, I see him stamp thus: — and call thus ---
Come on, ye cowards, ye were got in fear,
Though you were born in Rome; his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes
Like to a harvest-man, that's task'd to mow
Or all, or lose his hire.

VOLUMNIA.

His bloody brow! Oh, Jupiter, no blood!--

VETURIA.

Away, you fool; it more becomes a man,
Than guilt his trophy. The breast of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier,
Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords contending.

VOLUMNIA.

Heav'ns bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

VETURIA.

He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee,
And tread upon his neck.

Enter

The R O M A N M A T R O N. 3

Enter a Gentlewoman.

Gent. Madam, here's a messenger arrived, who says the army is on it's march back to Rome, having obtain'd a great victory over the Volsci—the honour of which is chiefly given to your son. He brings letters from him.

VETURIA.

O Jupiter! let us fly to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II.

MENENIUS, SICINIUS, and BRUTUS.

MENENIUS.

The Augur tells me, we shall have news to-night.

BRUTUS.

Good or bad?

MENENIUS:

Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius.

SICINIUS.

Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

MENENIUS.

Pray you, whom does the wolf love?

SICINIUS.

The lamb.

MENENIUS.

Ay, to devour him, as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius.

BRUTUS.

He's a lamb, indeed, that baes like a bear.

MENENIUS.

He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb.

You two are old men, tell me one thing that I shall ask you.

Both. Well, Sir;

MENENIUS.

In what enormity is Marcius poor, that you two have not in abundance?

B 2

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

He's poor in no one fault, but stor'd with all.

SICINIUS.

Especially with pride.

BRUTUS.

And topping all others in boasting.

MENENIUS.

This is strange now, do you two know how you are censur'd here in the city, I mean of us o'th' right hand file, do you?

BRUTUS.

Why,---how are we censur'd?

MENENIUS.

Because you talk of pride now, will you not be angry?

Both. Well, well, Sir, well.

MENENIUS.

You blame Marcius for being proud.

BRUTUS.

We do it not alone, Sir,

MENENIUS.

I know, you can do very little alone; for your helps are many, or else your actions would grow wond'rous single; your abilities are too infant-like, for doing much alone. You talk of pride---Oh, that you could turn your eyes towards the napes of your necks, and make but an interior survey of your good selves! Oh, that you could!

BRUTUS.

What then, Sir?

MENENIUS.

Why then, you should discover a brace of as unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates, alias, fools, as any in Rome.

SICINIUS.

Menenius, you are known well enough too.

MENENIUS.

I am known to be a humorous patrician, and one that loves a cup of good wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't: Said to be something imperfect, in favour-

The R O M A N M A T R O N. 5

ing the first complaint ; hasty and tinder-like, upon too trivial motion : one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning. What I think I utter ; and spend my malice in my breath. Meeting two such weal's-men as you are, (I cannot call you Lycurgusses) if the drink you give me touch my palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it.

BRUTUS.

Come, Sir, come, we know you well enough.

MENENIUS.

You know neither me, yourselves, nor any thing ; you are ambitious for poor knaves caps and legs ; you wear out a good wholesome forenoon, in hearing a cause between an orange-wench and a foffet-seller, and then adjourn a controversy of three-pence to a second day of audience.

BRUTUS.

Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table, than a necessary benchman in the Capitol.

MENENIUS.

Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are ; when you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards ; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave, as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be intomb'd in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying Marcus is proud ; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors, since Deucalion ; though, peradventure, some of them were hereditary hangmen. Goode'en to your worships ; more of your conversation wou'd infect my brain, being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians. I will be bold to take my leave of you. *Brutus and Sicinius stand aside.*

[As Menenius is going out, enter Veturia and Volumnia.]

How now my (as fair as noble) ladies, and the moon, were she earthly, no nobler. Whither do you follow your eyes so fast ?

B 3

VETU-

6 CORIOLANUS: Or,

VETURIA.
Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius approaches;
for the love of Juno, let's go.

MENENIUS.
Ha! Marcius coming home?

VETURIA.
Ay, worthy Menenius, and with most prosperous
approbation.

MENENIUS.
Take my cap, Jupiter, and I thank thee —
How, Marcius coming home!

VETURIA.
Nay, 'tis true.
Look, here's a letter from him, the state hath ano-
ther, his wife another; and I think, there's one at
home for you.

MENENIUS.
I will make my very house reel to night.
A letter for me!

VOLUMNIA.
Yes, certain, there's a letter for you, I saw't.

MENENIUS.
A letter for me! It gives me an estate of seven year's
health; in which time I will make a lip at the phy-
sician. The most sovereign prescription in Galen is
but emperic, and to this preservative, of no better re-
port than a horse-drench. Is he not wounded? He
was want to come home wounded.

VOLUMNIA.
Oh, no, no, no.

VETURIA.
Oh, he is wounded, I thank the Gods for't.

MENENIUS.
So do I too, if he be not too much; brings a vic-
tory in his pocket? The wounds become it.

VOLUMNIA.
On his brows, Menenius, he comes the third time
home with the oaken garland.

MENE-

The ROMAN MATRON. 7

MENENIUS.

Hath he disciplin'd Aufidius soundly ?

VETURIA.

Titus Lartius writes, they fought together; but Aufidius got off.

MENENIUS.

And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant him that. If he had staid by him, I would not have been so 'fidius'd for all the chests in Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the senate possesst of this ?

VETURIA.

Good ladies, let's go. Yes, yes, yes, the senate has letters from the general, wherein he gives my son the sole name of the war: he hath in this action out-done his former deeds doubly.

VOLUMNIA.

There's wond'rous things spoke of him.

MENENIUS.

Wond'rous! Ay, I warrant you, and not without his true purchasing.

VOLUMNIA.

The gods grant them true ?

VETURIA.

True! pow, waw.——

MENENIUS.

True! I'll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded? heaven save your good worships——Marcius is coming home; he has more cause to be proud. Where is he wounded? *[To the Tribunes.]*

VETURIA.

I' th' shoulder, and i' th' left arm; there will be large scars to shew the people, when he shall stand for his place. He receiv'd in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' th' body.

MENENIUS.

One i' th' neck, and one too i' th' thigh; there's nine, that I know.

8 CORIOLANUS: Or,

VETURIA.

He had before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him.

MENENIUS.

Now, 'tis twenty-seven; every gash was an enemy's grave. Hark, the trumpets. [*Shout and flourish.*]

VETURIA.

These are the ushers of Marcius; before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears.

Trumpets sound, enter Cominius the General, and Minucius; behind them Coriolanus, crown'd with an oaken garland, with Captains and Soldiers, and a Herald.

SCENE III.

Herald.

Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight
Within Corioli gates, where he hath won,
With fame, a name to Caius Marcius.
Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus.

ALL.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus.

CORIOLANUS,

No more of this, it does offend my heart;
Pray now, no more.

COMINIUS.

Look, Sir, your mother ———

CORIOLANUS.

Oh!

You have, I know, petition'd all the gods
For my prosperity.

[*Kneels.*]

VETURIA.

Nay, my good soldier, up:
My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and
By deed-achieving honour newly nam'd.
What is it, Coriolanus, must I call thee?
But oh! thy wife ———

CORI-

The ROMAN MATRON. 9

CORIO LANUS.

My gracious silence, hail!
Thou moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
And hang's on Dian's temple. Dear Volumnia,
Would'st thou have laugh'd, had I come coffin'd home,
That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,
Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
And mothers that lack sons.

VOLUMNIA.

This is a poor epitome of yours;

[Presenting his son to him.]

Which, by the interpretation of full time,
May shew like all yourself.

CORIO LANUS.

The God of soldiers,
With the consent of supreme Jove, inform
Thy thoughts with nobleness, that thou may'st prove
To shame invulnerable, and stick i' th' wars,
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,
And saving those that eye thee!

MENENIUS.

Now the Gods crown thee!

VETURIA.

I know not where to turn. O welcome home!
And welcome general! Y'are welcome all!

MENENIUS.

A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep,
And I could laugh. I'm light and heavy.—Welcome!
A curse begin at very root on's very heart,
That is not glad to see thee.—You are three,
That Rome should dote on: yet, by the faith of men,
We've some old crab-trees here at home, that will not
Be grafted to your relish. Welcome, warriors!
We call a nettle but a nettle, and
The faults of fools but folly.

COMINIUS.

Ever right.

CORIO LANUS.

Menenius, ever, ever.

HERMI-

10 CORIOLANUS: Or,

Herald.

Give way there, and go on.

CORIOLANUS.

'Ere in our own house I do shade my head,
The good Patricians must be visited;
From whom I have receiv'd, not only greetings,
But with them, charge of honours.

VETURIA.

I have lived,
To see inherited my very wishes,
And buildings of my fancy; only one thing
Is wanting, which, I doubt not, but our Rome
Will cast upon thee.

CORIOLANUS.

Know, good mother, I
Had rather be their servant in my way,
Than sway with them in theirs.

COMINIUS.

On to the Capitol. [*Flourish, exeunt in state as before.*]

SCENE IV.

Brutus and Sicinius come forward.

BRUTUS.

All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights
Are spectacl'd to see him.

SICINIUS.

On the sudden,
I warrant him Consul.

BRUTUS.

Then our office may,
During his power, go sleep.

SICINIUS.

He cannot temp'rately transport his honours
From where he should begin and end; but will
Lose those he hath won.

BRUTUS.

In that there's comfort.

SICI-

The ROMAN MATRON. 11

SICINIUS.

Doubt not,
The commoners, for whom we stand, but they,
Upon their ancient malice, will forget,
With the least cause, these his new honours; which
That he will give, make I as little question
As he is proud to do't.

BRUTUS.

I heard him swear,
Were he to stand for Consul, never would he
Appear i' th' market-place, nor on him put
The napless vesture of humility;
Nor shewing, as the manner is, his wounds
To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

SICINIUS.

'Tis right.

BRUTUS.

It was his word: Oh, he would miss it, rather
Than carry it; but by the suit o' th' gentry,
And the desire o' th' nobles.

SICINIUS.

I wish no better,
Than have him hold that purpose, and to put it
In execution.

BRUTUS.

'Tis most like he will.

SICINIUS.

It shall be to him then
A sure destruction.

BRUTUS.

So it must fall out
To him, or to our authorities. For which end,
We must suggest the people, in what hatred
He still hath held them; that to's power he would
Have made them mules, silenc'd their pleaders, and
Disproperty'd their freedoms: holding them
In human action and capacity,
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world

Than

Than camels in their war; who have their provender
Only for bearing burthens, and sore blows
For sinking under them.

SICINIUS.

This, as you say, suggested
At some time, when his soaring insolence
Shall reach the people, (which time shall not be wanting,
If he be put upon't; and that's as easy,
As to set dogs on sheep) will be the fire
To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
Shall darken him for ever.

Enter Ædile.

BRUTUS.

What's the matter?

Ædile.

You're sent for to the Capitol: 'tis thought,
That Marcius shall be Consul: I have seen
The deaf men throng to see him, and the blind
To hear him speak; the matrons flung their gloves,
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchiefs,
Upon him as he pass'd; their nobles bended,
As to Jove's statue; and the commons made
A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts:
I never saw the like.

BRUTUS.

Let's to the Capitol,
And carry with us eyes and ears for th' time,
But hearts for the event.

SICINIUS.

Have with you.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE

SCENE V. Senate-House.

Enter the Patricians and Tribunes of the people, Liſtors before them: MENENIUS, COMINIUS the conſul, MARCUS MINUTIUS the other conſul. SICINIUS and BRUTUS take their places by themſelves.

MENENIUS.

Having determin'd of the Volſcians, and
To ſend for Titus Lartius, it remains,
As the main point of this our after-meeting,
To gratify his noble ſervice, that
Hath thus ſtood for his country. Therefore, pleaſe
you,

Moſt reverend and grave elders, to deſire
The preſent conſul, and laſt general,
In our well found ſucceſſes, to report
A little of that worthy work perform'd
By Caius Marcius Coriolanus; whom
We meet here, both to thank, and to remember
With honours like himſelf.

Fiſt Senator.

Speak, good Cominius.

COMINIUS.

I ſhall lack voice: The deeds of Coriolanus
Should not be utter'd feebly: It is held,
That valour is the chiefſt virtue, and
Moſt dignifies the haver: if it be,
The man, I ſpeak of, cannot in the world
Be ſingly counter-poiſ'd. At ſixteen years,
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought
Beyond the mark of others:
And, in the brunt of ſeventeen battles ſince,
He lurcht all ſwords o'th' garland. For this laſt,
Before and in Corioli, let me ſay,
I cannot ſpeak him home: He ſtopt the fliers,
And by his rare example made the coward

Turn

14 CORIOLANUS: Or,

Turn terror into sport. As waves before
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd,
And fell below his stern : his sword, (death's stamp)
Where it did mark, it took from face to foot ;
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
Was tim'd with dying groans : alone he entred
The mortal gate o'th' city, which he painted
With shunless destiny : Aidless came off,
And with a sudden re-enforcement struck
Corioli, like a planet. Nor all's this ;
For by and by the din of war 'gan pierce
His ready sense, when strait his doubled spirit
Requicken'd what in body was fatigu'd,
And to the battle came he ; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'Twere a perpetual spoil ; and 'till we call'd
Both field and city ours, he never stood
To ease his breast with panting.

MENENIUS.

Worthy man !

First Senator.

He cannot but with measure fit the honours,
Which we devise him.

COMINIUS.

Our spoils he kick'd at,
And look'd upon things precious, as they were
The common muck o'th' world ; he covets less
Than misery itself would give, rewards
His deeds with doing them, and is content
To spend his time to end it.

MENENIUS,

He's right noble,
Let him be call'd for.

First Senator.

Call Coriolanus.

Officer.

He doth appear.

Enter

Enter CORIOLANUS.

MENENIUS.

The senate, Coriolanus, are well pleas'd
To make thee Consul.

CORIOLANUS.

I do owe them still
My life, and services.

MENENIUS.

It then remains
That you do speak to the people.

CORIOLANUS.

I beseech you,
Let me o'erleap that custom; for I cannot
Put on the gown, stand naked, and entreat them,
For my wounds sake, to give their suffrages:
Please you, that I may pass this doing.

SICINIUS.

Sir, the people must have their voices,
Nor will they bate one jot of ceremony.

MENENIUS.

Put them not to't: pray, fit you to the custom,
And take t'ye, as your predecessors have,
Your honour with your form.

CORIOLANUS.

It is a part
That I shall blush in acting, and might well
Be taken from the people.

BRUTUS.

Mark you that?

CORIOLANUS.

To brag unto them, thus I did,—— and thus,——
Shew them unaking scars, which I would hide,
As if I had receiv'd them from the hire
Of their breath only.——

MENENIUS.

Do not stand upon't:——

We recommend t'ye, tribunes of the people,

Our

Our purpose to them, and to our noble consul
Wish we all joy and honour.

Omnes.

To Coriolanus come all joy and honour,

[Flourish cornets, then exeunt.]

Manent SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

You see, how he intends to use the people.

SICINIUS.

May they perceive's intent! he will require them,
As if he did condemn, what he requested,
Should be in them to give.

BRUTUS.

Come, we will inform them
Of our proceedings here: on the market place,
I know, they do attend us. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE *The Forum.*

Enter seven or eight Citizens.

First Citizen.

Once, if he do require our voices,
We ought not to deny him.

Second Citizen.

We may, Sir, if we will.

Third Citizen.

We have power in ourselves to do it; but it is a
power that we have no power to do: for if he shews us
his wounds, and tell us his deeds, we are to put our
tongues into those wounds, and speak for them. So,
if he tells us his noble deeds, we must also tell him
our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is mon-
strous; and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to
make a monster of the multitude; of the which we be-
ing members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous
members.

Enter

Enter CORIOLANUS in a gown, with MENENIUS.

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility; mark his behaviour: we are not to stay altogether, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars, wherein every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues: therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

All. Content, content.

[Exeunt.]

MENENIUS.

Oh, Sir, you are not right; have you not known,
The worthiest men have done't?

CORIOLANUS.

What must I say?

I pray, Sir.— Plague upon't, I cannot bring
My tongue to such a pace! Look, Sir,— my
wounds—

I got them in my country's service, when
Some certain of your brethren roar'd, and ran
From noise of our own drums.

MENENIUS.

Oh me, the gods!

You must not speak of that, you must desire them
To think upon you.

CORIOLANUS.

Think upon me? Hang them.

I would, they would forget me.

MENENIUS.

You'll mar all.

I'll leave you: pray you, speak to them, I pray you,
In wholesome manner.

[Exit.]

Citizens approach.

CORIOLANUS.

So, here comes a brace:

You know the cause, Sirs, of my standing here.

C

First

First Citizen.

We do, Sir; tell us what has brought you to't.

CORIOLANUS.

Mine own desert.

Second Citizen.

Your own desert?

CORIOLANUS.

Ay, not mine own desire.

First Citizen.

How! not your own desire?

CORIOLANUS.

No, Sir, 'twas never yet my desire to trouble
The poor with begging.*First Citizen.*You must think, if we give you any thing, we hope
to gain by you.

CORIOLANUS.

Well then, I pray, you're price o'th' consulship?

First Citizen.

The price is, to ask it kindly.

CORIOLANUS.

Kindly, Sir, I pray, let me ha't: I have wounds to
shew you, which shall be yours in private: your good
voice, Sir; what say you?*Second Citizen.*

You shall ha't, worthy Sir.

CORIOLANUS.

A match, Sir; there's in all two worthy voices begg'd:
I have your alms, adieu.*First Citizen.*

But, this is something odd.

*Second Citizen.*An 'twere to give again: --- but 'tis no matter. [*Exeunt.*]*Enter three Citizens more.*

CORIOLANUS.

Here come more voices.

Your voices----for your voices I have fought,

Watch'd

The R O M A N M A T R O N. 19

Watch'd for your voices ; for your voices, bear
Of wounds two dozen and odd : Battles thrice six
I've seen, and heard of : For your voices, have
Done many things, some less, some more ---- your
voices : —

Third Citizen.

He has done nobly, and cannot go without any honest man's voice.

Fourth Citizen.

Therefore, let him be consul, the gods give him joy,
and make him a good friend to the people.

All.

Amen, amen, heav'n save thee, noble consul. [*Exeunt.*

C O R I O L A N U S.

Worthy voices !

Enter M E N E N I U S, B R U T U S, and S I C I N I U S.

M E N E N I U S.

You've stood your limitation : And the Tribunes
Endue you with the people's voice. Remains,
That in th' official marks invested, you
Anon do meet the senate.

C O R I O L A N U S.

Is this done ?

S I C I N I U S.

The custom of request you have discharg'd :
The people do admit you, and are summon'd
To meet anon, upon your approbation.

C O R I O L A N U S.

Where ? at the senate-house ?

S I C I N I U S.

There, Coriolanus.

C O R I O L A N U S.

May I change these garments ?

S I C I N I U S.

You may, Sir.

CORIOLANUS.

That I'll straight do: and, knowing myself again,
Repair to the Senate-house. *[Exeunt.]*

MENENIUS.

I'll keep you company. Will you along?

BRUTUS.

We stay here for the people.

SICINIUS.

Fare you well. *[Exeunt Coriolanus and Menenius.]*

He has it now, and by his looks, methinks,

'Tis warm at's heart.

BRUTUS.

With a proud heart he wore

His humble weeds: Will you dismiss the people?

Enter Plebeians.

SICINIUS.

How now, my masters, have you chose this man?

First Citizen.

He has our voices, Sir.

BRUTUS.

We pray the Gods, he may deserve your loves.

Second Citizen.

Amen, Sir, to my poor unworthy notice,
He mock'd us, when he begg'd our voices:

Third Citizen.

Certainly, he flouted us downright.

First Citizen.

No, 'tis his kind of speech, he did not mock us.

Second Citizen.

Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says
He us'd us scornfully: He should have shew'd us
His marks of merit, wounds receiv'd for's country.

SICINIUS.

Why, so he did, I am sure.

Alt.

No, no man saw 'em.

Third

Third Citizen.

He said he'd wounds, which he could shew in
private;

And with his cap, thus waving it in scorn,
I would be consul, says he: Aged custom,
But by your voices, will not so permit me;
Your voices therefore: When we granted that,
Here was—I thank you for your voices—thank you—
Your most sweet voices—now you have left your
voices,

I have nothing further with you. Wa'nt this mockery?

SICINIUS.

Why, either, were you ignorant to see't?
Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness
To yield your voices?

BRUTUS.

Did you perceive,
He did solicit you in free contempt,
When he did need your loves? And do you think
That his contempt shall not be bruising to you,
When he hath power to crush? Why, had your
bodies

No heart among you? Or had your tongues, to cry
Against the rectorship of judgment?

SICINIUS.

Have you,
Ere now deny'd the asker? And now again
On him that did not ask, but mock, bestow
Your su'd for tongues?

Third Citizen.

He's not confirm'd, we may deny him yet.

Second Citizen.

And, will deny him:
I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

First Citizen.

I, twice five hundred, and their friends to piece 'em.

BRUTUS.

Get you hence, instantly, and tell those friends,

C 3

They've

They've chose a consul that will from them take
 Their liberties; make them of no more voice
 Than dogs, that are as often beat for barking,
 As therefore kept to do so.

SICINIUS.

Let them assemble;
 And on a safer judgment all revoke
 Your ignorant election: Enforce his pride,
 And his old hate to you.
 When you have drawn your number,
 Repair to th' Capitol.

All.

We will so; almost all repent in their election.

BRUTUS.

Let them go on: [Exeunt Plebeians.
 This mutiny were better put in hazard,
 Than stay past doubt for greater:
 If, as his nature is, he fall in rage
 With their refusal, both observe and answer
 The vantage of his anger.

SICINIUS.

To th' Capitol, come;
 We will be there before the stream o'th' people:
 And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own,
 Which we have goaded onward.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T. II. S C E N E I.

Enter Coriolanus, Menenius, Cominius, Marcus Minucius, and other Senators.

CORIO LANUS.

T Ullus Aufidius then had made new head ?

MINUCIUS.

He had, my Lord, and that it was, which caus'd
Our swifter composition.

CORIO LANUS.

So then the Volscians stand but as at first,
Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make road
Upon's again.

COMINIUS.

They're worn, Lord Consul, so,
That we shall hardly in our ages see
Their banners wave again.

Enter Sicinius and Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Behold, these are the Tribunes of the people.
Th' tongues of the common mouth : I do despise
them ;

For they do prank them in authority
Against all noble sufferance.

SICINIUS.

Pafs no further.

CORIO LANUS,

Hah !——What is that !——

BRUTUS.

It will be dangerous to go on.——No further,

CORIO LANUS.

What makes this change ?

MENENIUS.

MENENIUS.

The matter?

COMINIUS.

Hath he not pass'd the nobles and the commons?

BRUTUS.

Cominius, no.

CORIOLANUS.

Have I had children's voices?

MINUCIUS.

Tribunes, give way, he shall to th' market-place.

BRUTUS.

The people are incens'd against him.

SICINIUS.

Stop,

Or all will fall in broil.

CORIOLANUS.

Are these your herd?

Must these have voices, that can yield them now,

And straight disclaim their tongues?

What are your offices?

You being their mouths, why rule you not their teeth?

Have you not set them on?

MENENIUS.

Be calm, be calm.

CORIOLANUS.

It is a purpos'd thing, and grows by plot,

To curb the will of the nobility.

Suffer't, and live with such as cannot rule,

Nor ever will be rul'd.

At once pluck out

The multitudinous tongue, let them not lick

The sweet which is their poison. Your dishonour

Mangles true judgment, and bereaves the state

Of that integrity which should become it:

Not having power to do the good it would,

For th' ill which doth controul it.

BRUTUS.

H' as said enough.

SICI-

SICINIUS.

H'as spoken like a traytor, and shall answer as traytors do.

CORIOLANUS.

Thou wretch! Despight o'erwhelm thee! —
What should the people do with these bald tribunes?
On whom depending, their obedience fails
To th' greater bench. In a rebellion,
When what's not meet, but what must be, was law,
Then were they chosen; in a better hour,
Let what is meet, be said, it must be meet,
And throw their power i' th' dust.

BRUTUS.

Manifest treason —

SICINIUS.

This a Consul! No.

BRUTUS.

The Ædiles, ho! Let him be apprehended.

Enter Ædiles.

SICINIUS.

Go call the people, in whose name myself
Attach thee as a traiterous innovator:
A foe to th' publick weal. Obey, I charge thee,
And follow to thine answer. [*Laying hold on Coriolanus.*]

CORIOLANUS.

Hence, old goat.

All.

We'll surety him.

COMINIUS.

Aged sir, hands off.

CORIOLANUS.

Hence, rotten thing, or I shall shake thy bones
Out of thy garments.

SICINIUS.

Help me, citizens.

Enter

Enter a rabble of Plebeians.

BRUTUS.

Seize him, Ædiles.

SICINIUS.

Lay hold on him ;
Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence
Into destruction cast him.

CORIOLANUS.

No ; I'll dye here. *[Draws his sword.]*
There's some among you has beheld me fighting,
Come, try upon your selves, what you have seen me.

MENENIUS.

Down with that sword.
Tribunes, withdraw a while.

BRUTUS.

Lay hands upon him.

MENENIUS.

Help, Marcius, help—you that be noble,
Help him young and old.

All.

Down with him, down with him. *[Exeunt.]*
*In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the Ædiles, and the
People, are beaten in.*

MENENIUS.

Go, get you to your house ; be gone, away,
All will be naught else.

M. MINUCIUS.

Get you gone.

CORIOLANUS.

Stand fast, we have as many friends as enemies.

MENENIUS.

Shall it be put to that ?

2d Senator.

The Gods forbid !

I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house,
Leave us to cure this cause.

MENENIUS.

For, 'tis a fore
You cannot tent yourself; begone, beseech you.

COMINIUS.

Come, Sir, along with us.

MENENIUS.

I would, they were barbarians, (as they are,
Though in Rome litter'd;) not Romans: (as they are not,
Though calv'd in the porch o' th' Capitol :)
Begone, put not your worthy rage into your tongue,
One time will owe another.

CORIOLANUS.

On fair ground I could beat forty of them.

MENENIUS.

I could my self take up a brace o' th' best of them;
Yea, the two tribunes.

COMINIUS.

But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetick :
And manhood is call'd fool'ry, when it stands
Against a falling fabrick. Will you hence,
Before the tag return.

MENENIUS.

Pray you, be gone ;
I'll try, if my old wit be in request
With those that have but little; this must be patcht
With cloth of any colour.

COMINIUS.

Come, away. [*Exeunt Coriolanus and Cominius.*
First Senator.

This man has marr'd his fortune.

MENENIUS.

His nature is too noble for the world :
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for's power to thunder : his heart's his mouth :
What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;
And, being angry, does forget that ever
He heard the name of death. [*A noise within.*
Here's goodly work !

Second

Second Senator.

I would they were a-bed.

MENENIUS.

I would, they were in Tyber——What the Vengeance,
Could he not speak 'em fair?

Enter BRUTUS and SICINIUS, with the Rabble again.

SICINIUS.

Where is this viper,
That would depopulate the city, and
Be every man himself.

MENENIUS.

You worthy tribunes——

SICINIUS.

He shall be thrown down the tarpeian rock
With rigorous hands; he hath resisted law,
And therefore law shall scorn him further trial
Than the severity of publick power,
Which he so sets at naught.

First Citizen.

He shall well know, the noble tribunes are
The people's mouths, and we their hands.

All.

He shall be sure on't.

MENENIUS.

Sir, Sir ——

SICINIUS.

Peace.

MENENIUS.

Do not cry havock, where you should but hunt
With modest warrant.

SICINIUS.

Sir, how comes it, you
Have help to make this rescue?

MENENIUS.

Hear me speak;
As I do know the consul's worthiness,
So, can I name his faults ——

SICI-

SICINIUS.

Consul! — What consul?

MENENIUS.

The consul Coriolanus.

BRUTUS.

He consul! —

All.

No, no, no, no, no.

MENENIUS.

If, by the tribune's leave, and yours, good people,
I may be heard, I'd crave a word or two;
The which shall turn you to no further harm,
Than so much loss of time.

SICINIUS.

Speak briefly, then,
For we are peremptory to dispatch
This viperous traitor; to eject him hence,
Were but our danger; and to keep him here,
Our certain death; therefore it is decreed,
He dies to night.

MENENIUS.

Now the Gods forbid,
That our renowned Rome, whose gratitude
Tow'rs her deserving children is enroll'd
In Jove's own book, like an unnatural dam,
Should now eat up her own.

SICINIUS.

He's a disease that must be cut away.

MENENIUS.

Oh, he's a limb, that has but a disease;
Mortal, to cut it off; to cure it easy.
What has he done to Rome, that's worthy death?
Killing our enemies: the blood he hath lost,
(Which, I dare vouch, is more than that he hat'h,
By many an ounce) he dropt it for his country:
And what is left, to lose it by his country,
Were to us all that do't, and suffer it,
A brand to th' end o' th' world.

BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

When he did love his country, it honour'd him.

MENENIUS.

The service of the foot
Being once gangren'd, it is not then respected
For what before it was —

BRUTUS.

We'll hear no more.

Pursue him to his house, and pluck him thence;
Lest his infection, being of a catching nature,
Spread further.

MENENIUS.

One word more, one word:
This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find
The harm of unskann'd swiftness, will (too late)
Tye leaden pounds to's heels. Proceed by process,
Lest parties (as he is belov'd) break out,
And sack great Rome with Romans.

BRUTUS.

If 'twere so —

SICINIUS.

What do ye talk?

Have we not had a taste of his obedience,
Our Ædiles struck, our selves resisted? Come —

MENENIUS.

Consider this; he hath been bred i' th' wars
Since he could draw a sword, and is ill school'd
In boulded language; meal and bran together
He throws without distinction. Give me leave,
I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him
Where he shall answer by a lawful form,
In peace, to his utmost peril.

First Senator.

Noble tribunes,
It is the humane way: the other course
Will prove too bloody, and the end of it
Unknown to the beginning.

SICINIUS.

Noble Menenius,

Be

Be you then as the people's officer.
Masters, lay down your weapons.

BRUTUS.

Go not home.

SICINIUS.

Meet on the Forum, we'll attend you there,
Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed
In our first way.

MENENIUS.

I'll bring him to you.
Let me desire your company; he must come,
Or what is worst will follow.

First Senator.

Pray, let's to him.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, CORIOLANUS'S *House.*

Enter CORIOLANUS, Nobles, and VETUTIA.

CORIOLANUS.

Let them pull all about my ears, present me
Death on the wheel, or at wild horse's heels,
Or pile ten hills on the tarpeian rock,
That the precipitation might down-stretch
Below the beam of sight, yet will I still
Be thus to them.

I muse, my mother

Does not approve me further, who was wont
To call them woolen vassals. I talk of you.

Why did you wish me milder? Wou'd you have me
False to my nature? Rather say, I play
The man I am.

VETURIA.

Oh, fir, fir, fir,

I would have had you put your power well on,
Before you had worn it out.

CORIOLANUS.

Let it go —

VETU-

VETURIA.

You might have been enough the man you are,
 With striving less to be so. Lesser had been
 The thwartings of your dispositions, if
 You had not shew'd them how you were dispos'd
 E're they lack'd power to cross you.

CORIOLANUS.

Let them hang.

VETURIA.

Ay, and burn too.

Enter Menenius and Senators.

MENENIUS.

Come, come, you've been too rough, something too
 rough:

You must return, and mend it.

Second Senator.

There's no remedy,
 Unless, by not so doing, our good city
 Cleave in the midst, and perish.

VETURIA.

Pray, be counsell'd ;
 I have a heart as little apt as yours ,
 But yet a brain that leads my use of anger
 To better vantage.

MENENIUS.

Well said, noble woman :
 Before he should thus stoop to th' herd, but that
 The violent fit of the times craves it as physick
 For the whole state, I'd put mine armour on,
 Which I can scarcely bear.

CORIOLANUS.

What must I do ?

MENENIUS.

Return to th' tribunes.

CORIOLANUS.

Well, What then ? What then ?

MENE-

MENENIUS.

Repent what you have spoke.

CORIOLANUS.

For them?---I cannot do it for the Gods,
Must I then do't for them?

VETURIA.

You are too absolute,
Tho' therein you can never be too noble,
But when extremities speak. I've heard you say,
Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,
I'th' war do grow together : Grant that, and tell me,
In peace, what each of them by th'other loses,
That they combine not there?

CORIOLANUS.

Tush, tush—

MENENIUS.

A good demand.

VETURIA.

If it be honour in your wars, to seem
The thing you are not, which for your best ends
You call your policy ; how is't less, or worse,
That it shall hold companionship in peace
With honour, as in war ; since that to both
It stands in like request?

CORIOLANUS.

Why enforce you this?

VETURIA.

Because it lies on you to speak to th' people :
Not by your own instruction, nor by th' matter
Which your heart prompts you to, but with such
words ;

But roared in your tongue ; bastards and syllables
Of no allowance, to your bosom's truth.
Now, this no more dishonours you at all,
Than to take in a town with gentle words,
Which else would put you to your fortune, and
The hazard of much blood.----
I would dissemble with my nature, where

D

My

My fortunes, and my friends, at stake requir'd.
I should do so in honour. I am in this
Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles.---

MENENIUS.

Noble lady!

Come, go with us, speak fair: you may salve so
Not what is dangerous present, but the loss
Of what is past.

VETURIA.

I pr'ythee now, my son,
Go to them with thy bonnet in thy hand,
And thus far having stretch't it, (here be with them)
Thy knee buffing the stones; (for in such business
Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th' ignorant
More learned than the ears:] or say to them,
Thou art their soldier, and, being bred in broils,
Hast not the soft way, which thou dost confess
Were fit for thee to use, as they to claim,
In asking their good loves; but thou wilt frame
Thyself (forsooth) hereafter theirs so far,
As thou hast power and person.

MENENIUS.

This but done,
Ev'n as she speaks, why, all their hearts were yours:
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free,
As words to little purpose.

VETURIA.

Pry'thee now,
Go and be rul'd: altho', I know, thou'dst rather
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulph,
Than flatter him in a bower.
Here is Cominius.

Enter COMINIUS.

COMINIUS.

I've been i'th' market place, and, Sir, 'tis fit
You have strong party, or defend yourself

By

By calmness, or by absence : All's in anger.

MENENIUS.

Only, fair speech.

COMINIUS.

I think, 'twill serve, if he
Can thereto frame his spirit.

VETURIA.

He must and will :

Pry'thee now, say you will, and go about it.

CORIOLANUS.

Must my base tongue give to my noble heart
A lie, that it must bear ? Well, I will do't :
Yet were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind it,
And throw't against the wind. To th' market place !
You've put me now to such a part, which never
I shall discharge to th' life.

COMINIUS.

Come, come, we'll prompt you.

VETURIA.

Ay, pry'thee now, sweet son ; as thou hast said,
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,
To have my praise for this, perform a part
Thou hast not done before.

CORIOLANUS.

Well, I must do't :

Away, my disposition, and possess me
Some harlot's spirit ! my throat of war be turn'd,
Which quired with my drum, into a pipe
Small as an Eunuch's, or the Virgin's voice
That babies lulls asleep ! the smiles of knaves
Tent in my cheeks, and school boys tears take up
The glasses of my sight ! a beggar's tongue
Make motion through my lips, and my arm'd knees,
Which bow'd but in my stirrup, bend like his
That hath receiv'd an alms !---I will not do't,---
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth,
And, by my body's action, teach my mind,

36 CORIOLANUS: Or,

A most inherent baseness.

VETURIA.

At thy choice then:

To beg of thee, it is my more dishonour,
Than thou of them. Come all to ruin, let
Thy mother rather feel thy pride, than fear
Thy dangerous stoutness: for I mock at death
With as big heart as thou. Do, as thou list:
Thy valiantness was mine, thou suck'dst it from me:
But own thy pride thyself.

CORIOLANUS.

Pray, be content:

Mother, I'm going to the market place:
Chide me no more. I'll mountebank their loves,
Cog their hearts from them, and come home belov'd
Of all the trades in Rome. Look, I am going:
Commend me to my wife. I'll return Consul,
Or never trust to what my tongue can do
I'th' way of flattery further.

VETURIA.

Do your will.

[Exit Veturia.]

COMINIUS.

Away, the tribunes do attend you: Arm
Yourself to answer mildly: for they're prepar'd
With accusations, as I hear, more strong
Than are upon you yet.

CORIOLANUS.

The word is, mildly. Pray you, let us go.
Let them accuse me by invention; I
Will answer in mine honour.

MENENIUS.

Ay, but mildly.

CORIOLANUS.

Well, mildly let it be then, mildly.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE

SCENE III. *The Forum.*

Enter SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

BRUTUS.

In this point charge him home, that he affects
Tyrannick power : if he evade us there,
Inforce him with his envy to the people.
What, will he come ?

Enter an Ædile.

Ædile.

He's coming, Sir,

BRUTUS.

How accompanied ?

Ædile.

With old Menenius, and those senators
That always favour'd him.

SICINIUS.

Have you a catalogue
Of all the voices that we have 'procur'd,
Set down by th' poll ?

Ædile.

I have ; 'tis ready, here.

SICINIUS.

Have you collected them by tribes ?

Ædile.

I have.

SICINIUS.

Assemble presently the people hither,
And when they hear me say, it shall be so,
I'th' right and strength o'th' commons ; (be it either,
For death, for fine, or banishment,) then let them,
If I say fine, cry fine ; if death, cry death ;
Insisting on the old prerogative
And power, i'th' truth o'th' cause.

D 3

Ædile.

Ædile.

I will inform them.

BRUTUS.

And when such time they have begun to cry,
Let them not cease, but with a din confus'd
Inforce the present execution,
Of what we chance to sentence.

Ædile.

Very well.

SICINIUS.

Make them be strong and ready for this hint,
When we shall hap to give't them.

BRUTUS.

Go about it, [Exit Ædile,
Put him to choler freight; he hath been us'd
Ever to conquer, and to have his word
Of contradiction. Being once chaf'd, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temp'rance; then he speaks
What's in his heart.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, MENENIUS, with COMINIUS and
Others.*

SICINIUS.

Well, here he comes.

MENENIUS.

Calmly, I do beseech you.

CORIOLANUS.

Ay, as an hostler, that for the poorest piece
Will bear the knave by th' volume:--the honour'd
Gods

Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
Supply with worthy men, plant love amongst you,
Throng our large temples with the shews of peace,
And not our streets with war!

MENENIUS.

A noble wish.

Enter

Enter Ædile and Plebeians.

SICINIUS.

Draw near, ye people.

Ædile.

Lift to your tribunes: audience.

Plebeians.

Hear him, hear him.

Peace, I say.

CORIOLANUS.

First, hear me speak.

Both Tribunes.

Well, say.

CORIOLANUS.

Shall I be charg'd no farther than this present?

Must all determine here?

SICINIUS.

I do demand,

If you submit you to the people's voices,

Allow their officers, and are content

To suffer lawful censure for your faults,

As shall be prov'd upon you?

CORIOLANUS.

I am content.

MENENIUS.

Lo, citizens, he says, he is content:

The warlike service he has done, consider.

Think on the wounds his body bears, which shew

Like graves in a church-yard.

CORIOLANUS.

Scratches with briars, scars to move laughter only.

MENENIUS.

Consider further;

That when he speaks not like a citizen,

You find him like a soldier; do not take

His rougher accents for malicious sounds:

But, as I say, such as become a soldier,

Rather than envy, you —

COMINIUS.

Well, well, no more.

CORIOLANUS.

What is the matter

That being past for consul with full voice,

I'm so dishonour'd, that the very hour

You take it off again?

SICINIUS.

Answer to us.

CORIOLANUS.

Say then : 'tis true, I ought so.

SICINIUS.

We charge you, that you have contriv'd to take

From Rome all season'd office, and to wind

Yourself into a power tyrannical ;

For which you are a traitor to the people.

CORIOLANUS.

How?—Traitor? ———

MENENIUS.

Nay, temperately ; your promise.

CORIOLANUS.

The fires i' th' lowest hell fold in the people !

Call me their traitor ! Thou injurious tribune !

Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,

In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in

Thy lying tongue both numbers ; I would say,

Thou liest, unto thee, with a voice as free,

As I do pray the Gods.

SICINIUS.

Mark you this, people ?

All.

To the rock with him.

SICINIUS.

Peace.

We need not lay new matter to his charge :

What you have seen him do, and heard him speak ;

Beating your officers, cursing you selves,

Opposing laws with strokes, and here defying

Those

The R O M A N M A T R O N. 41

Those whose great power must try him ; even this,
So criminal, and in such capital kind,
Deserves th' extremest death.

BRUTUS.

But since he hath
Serv'd well for Rome ———

CORIOLANUS.

What do you prate of service ?

BRUTUS.

I talk of that, that know it.

CORIOLANUS.

You ? ———

MENENIUS.

Is this the promise that you made your mother ?

COMINIUS.

Know, I pray you ———

CORIOLANUS.

I'll know no farther.

Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,
Vagabond exile, fleeing, pent to linger
But with a grain a day, I would not buy
Their mercy at the price of one fair word ;
Nor check my courage for what they can give,
To have't with saying, good morrow.

SICINIUS.

For that he has

(As much as in him lies) from time to time,
Envy'd against the people ; seeking means
To pluck away their power ; as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that, not in the presence
Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers
That do distribute it ; in the name o' th' people,
And in the power of us the tribunes, we
(Ev'n from this instant) banish him our city ;
In peril of precipitation
From off the Tarpeian rock, never more
To enter our Rome's gates. I' th' people's name,
I say, it shall be so.

All.

All.

It shall be so, it shall be so; let him away:
He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

COMINIUS.

Hear me, my masters, and my common friends——

SICINIUS.

He's sentenc'd: no more hearing.

All.

It shall be so, it shall be so.

CORIOLANUS.

You common cry of curs, whose breath I hate
As reek o' th' rotten fens; whose loves I prize
As the dead carcases of unbury'd men,
That do corrupt my air; I banish you!
And here remain with your uncertainty;
Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts;
Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,
Fan you into despair: have the power still
To banish your defenders, 'till at length,
Your ignorance and folly shall deliver you,
As most abated captives, to some nation
That won you without blows! Despising then,
For you, the city, thus I turn my back:
There is a world elsewhere——

*[Exit Coriolanus, Cominius and others. The people
shout, throw up their caps, and exeunt.]*

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III.

SCENE, *The Volcian Camp.*

ATTIUS TULLUS, and VOLUSIUS.

VOLUSIUS.

WHENCE is it, Tullus, that our arms are stopt
Here on the borders of the Roman state?
Why sleeps that spirit, whose heroick ardour
Urg'd you to break the truce, and pour'd our host
From all th' united cantons of the Volsci,
On their unguarded frontiers; such designs
Brook not an hour's delay; their whole success
Depends on instant vigorous execution.

TULLUS.

Volusius, I approve thy brave impatience;
And will to thee, in confidence of friendship,
Disclose my secret soul. Thou know'st Galesus,
Whose freedom Caius Marcius, once his guest,
Of all the spoil of sack'd Corioli,
Alone demanded; and who thence to Rome,
From gratitude and friendship, follow'd Marcius;
Whence lately to our Antium he return'd,
With overtures of peace propos'd by Rome.

VOLUSIUS.

O, 'tis a wild chimæra! Peace with Rome!
Dream not of that, unless the Volcian courage
Be quite subdu'd, and only seeks to gild
A vile submission with that specious name.
Learn wisdom from your neighbours. Peace with Rome
Has quell'd the Latins, tam'd their free-born spirit,
And by her friendship honour'd them with chains.

TULLUS.

She ne'er will grant it on the just conditions
I now have brought the Volsci to demand:
The restitution of our conquer'd cities,
And fair alliance upon equal terms.

I know

I know the Roman insolence will scorn
 To yield to this; and Titus must return
 Within three days, the longest term allow'd him;
 Of which the third is near elaps'd already.
 Then even Galesus will not dare to stop us,
 With superstitious forms, and solemn trifles,
 From letting loose th' unbridled rage of war
 Against those hated tyrants of Hesperia.

VOLUSIUS.

Thanks to the Gods! my sword will then be free.
 Then, poor Corioli! thy bleeding wounds,
 Thy treasures sack'd, thy captivated matrons,
 Shall amply be reveng'd by thy Volusius:
 Then, Tullus, from the lofty brows of Marcius,
 Thou may'st regain the wreaths his conquering hand,
 By partial fortune aided, tore from thine.

TULLUS.

O, my Volusius! thou, who art a soldier,
 A try'd and brave one too, say, in thy heart
 Dost thou not scorn me? Thou, who saw'st me bend
 Beneath the half-spent thunder of a foe,
 Warm from the conquest of Corioli;
 His wounds undrest, in haste he flew
 To where our armies on the fearful edge
 Of battle stood; and asking, of the consul,
 To be oppos'd to me, with mighty rage,
 Resistless, bore us down.

VOLUSIUS.

True Valour, Tullus,
 Lies in the mind, the never-yielding purpose,
 Nor owns the blind award of giddy fortune.

TULLUS.

My soul, my friend, my soul is all on fire!
 Thirst of revenge consumes me! the revenge
 Of generous emulation, not of hatred.
 Yes, Marcius, I will yet redeem my fame.
 To face thee once again is the great purpose
 For which a'one I live——Till then, how slow,

How

How tedious lags the time! while shame corrodes me,
With many a bitter thought; and injur'd honour
Sick, and desponding, preys upon it self.

VOLUSIUS.

It fast approaches now, the hour of vengeance,
To this fam'd land, to ancient Latium due.
Unballanc'd Rome, at variance with her self;
To order lost, in hot and deep commotion,
Stands on the dangerous point of civil war;
Her haughty nobles and seditious commons
Reviling, fearing, hating one another:
While, on our part, all wears a prosperous face:
Our troops united, numerous, high in spirit,
As if their general's soul inform'd them all.
O long expected day!

TULLUS.

Go, brave Volusius,
Go breath thy ardour into every breast,
That when the Volscian envoy shall return,
One spirit may unite us in the cause
Of generous freedom, and our native rights,
So long oppress'd by Rome's encroaching power.
[Exit Volusius.]

TULLUS *alone*.

Galesus said that Marcius stands for consul.
O favour thou his suit, propitious Jove!
That I may brave him at his army's head,
In all the majesty of sovereign power!

Enter an Officer.

Ha! why this haste? You look alarm'd.

Officer.

My lord,
One of exalted port, his visage hid,
Has plac'd himself upon your sacred hearth,

Beneath

Beneath the dread protection of your lares,
And sits majestic there in solemn silence.

TULLUS.

Did you not ask him who, and what he was?

Officer.

My lord, I cou'd not speak; I felt appall'd,
As if the presence of some god had struck me.

TULLUS.

Come, dastard! Let me find this man of terrors.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE *Opens and discovers CORIOLANUS
as described.*

Enter TULLUS, after some silence he speaks.

Illustrious stranger!—for thy high demeanour
Bespeaks thee such——Who art thou?

CORIOLANUS. *[Rising, and unmuffling his face.]*

View me TULLUS——

Dost thou not know me?

TULLUS.

[After some pause.]

No, that noble front

I never saw before. What is thy name?

CORIOLANUS.

Does not the secret voice of hostile instinct,
Does not thy swelling heart declare me to thee!

TULLUS.

Gods!—Can it be?

CORIOLANUS.

Yes, I am Caius Marcius;

Known to thy smarting country by the name
Of Coriolanus; that alone is left me,

That empty name, for all my toils, my service,
The blood which I have shed for thankless Rome.

Behold me banish'd thence, a victim yielded
By her weak nobles to the maddening rabble.

I seek

I seek revenge. Thou may'st employ my sword,
 With keener edge, with heavier force against her,
 Than e'er it fell upon the Volscian nation.
 —ut if thou, Tullus, dost refuse me this,
 The only wish of my collected heart,
 Where every passion in one burning point
 Concenters; give me death: Death from thy hand
 I sure have well deserv'd --Nor shall I blush
 To take or life or death from Attius Tullus.

TULLUS.

Oh! Marcius! Marcius!

Each word, thou'st spoke, hath weeded from my
 heart

A Root of ancient envy. Let me twine
 Mine arms about that body, where against
 My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,
 And scar'd the moon with splinters: Here I clip
 The anvil of my sword, and do contest
 As hotly, and as nobly with thy love,
 As ever in ambitious strength I did
 Contend against thy valour.

CORIOLANUS.

Thus, generous Tullus, take a soldier's thanks,
 [Embracing him.]

Who is not practis'd in the gloss of words----
 Thou friend indeed! Friend to my cause, my quarrel!
 Friend to the darling passion of my soul!
 All else I set at naught! immortal Gods!
 I am new made, and wonder at myself!
 A little while ago, and I was nothing;
 A powerless reptile, crawling on the earth,
 Curs'd with a soul that restless wish'd to wield
 The bolts of Jove! I dwelt in Erebus.
 I wandred through the hopeless glooms of hell,
 Stung with revenge, tormented by the furies!
 Now, Tullus, like a God, you draw me thence,
 Throne me amidst the skies, with tempest charg'd,
 And put the ready thunder in my hand!

TULLUS.

TULLUS.

What I have promis'd, Marcius, I will do.
 Within an hour at farthest we expect
 The freedman of Galesus back from Rome
 Who carry'd to the senate our demands.
 Their answer will, I doubt not, end the truce,
 And instant draw our angry swords against them.
 Till then retire within my inmost tent,
 Unknown to all but me, that when our chiefs
 Meet in full council to declare for war,
 I may produce thee to their wondering eyes,
 As if descended from avenging Heaven,
 To humble lofty Rome, and teach her justice.

CORIOLANUS.

O righteous Jove! protector of the injur'd!
 If from my earliest youth, with pious awe,
 I still have reverenc'd thy all-powerful justice,
 Still by her sacred dictates rul'd my actions,
 O let that Justice now support my cause,
 And arm my strong right hand with all her terrors
 When that is done, be life or death my lot,
 As thy almighty pleasure shall determine.

*Enter an Officer.**Officer.*

My lord Galesus asks admittance to you.

TULLIUS.

Marcius, retire an instant, 'till I hear
 The business brings him hither---Bid him enter
 [*Exit. Officer and Coriolanus.*]

Enter GALESUS.

GALESUS.

Tullus, the Roman Senate has return'd
 No other answer, to our late demands,
 But absolute denial and defiance.

TULLUS.

TULLUS.

It is what I expected---we shall teach them
An humbler language soon--Hast thou assembled,
As I desir'd, the Volsian chiefs in council?

GALESUS.

Titus is gone to summon their attendance.

TULLUS.

It is enough---Come forth, my noble guest;
And shew Galesus how the Gods assist us.

Enter CORIOLANUS.

GALESUS.

O my astonish'd soul! What do I see?
What! Caius Marcius! Caius Marcius here,
Beneath one tent with Tullus?

TULLUS.

Ay, and more,
With Tullus, now his friend and fellow-soldier.
Yes, thou shalt see him thundering at the head
Of Volsian armies; he, who oft has carry'd
Destruction thro' their ranks--- your leave a moment,
While to our chiefs and fathers I announce
Their unexpected guest. *[Exit Tullus.]*

CORIOLANUS.

Thou good old man!
Close let me strain thee to my faithful heart,
Which now is doubly thine, united more
By the protection which thy country gives me,
Than by our former friendship.

GALESUS.

Strange event!
This is thy work, almighty providence!
Whose power, beyond the stretch of human thought,
Revolves the orbs of empire; bids them sink
Deep in the deadning night of thy displeasure,
Or rise majestic o'er a wondering world.
The Gods, by thee---I see it, Coriolanus,---
E
Mean

50 CORIOLANUS: Or,
Mean to exalt us, and depress the Romans.

CORIOLANUS.

Galesus, yes, the Gods have sent me hither;
Those righteous Gods, who, when vindictive justice
Excites them to destroy a worthless people,
Make their own crimes and follies strike the blow.

GALESUS.

Ah! the full image of thy woes dissolves me!
The pangs thou must have born at parting from thee,
Thy mother and thy wife. I cannot think
Of that sad scene without some drops of pity!

CORIOLANUS.

Who was it forc'd me to that bitter parting?
Who, in one cruel hasty moment, chas'd me
From wife, from children, friends, and household
Gods?

Me! who so often had protected theirs.
Who, from the sacred city of my fathers
Drove me with nature's commoners to dwell,
To lodge beneath their wide unshelter'd roof,
And at their table feed? O blast me, Gods!
With every woe! debility of mind,
Dishonour, just contempt, and palsy'd weakness,
If I forgive the villains!

GALESUS.

May Coriolanus
Be to the Volscian nation, and himself,
The dread, the God-like instrument of justice!
But let not rage and vengeance mix their rancour;
Let them not trouble with their fretful storm,
Their angry gleams, that azure, where enthron'd
The calm divinity of justice sits,
And pities, while she punishes mankind.

Enter TULLUS.

TULLUS. [*Embracing*]

Marcus, I joy to call thee my companion,

And

The ROMAN MATRON. 51

And colleague in this war. Our senators,
With eager joy agreed to my request,
And give thee rule o'er half the Volscian powers.

CORIOLANUS.

By all the Gods !

Thou art the generous victor of my soul !

Yes, Tullus, I am conquer'd by thy virtue.

I burn to enter on the glorious task

You now have mark'd me out. How slow the time

To the warm soul, that in the very instant

It forms, wou'd execute, a great design.

'Tis my advice we march direct to Rome ;

We cannot be too quick.

TULLUS.

I much approve

Of this advice. 'Tis what I thought before,

Ere strengthen'd, Marcius, by thy mighty arm :

But now 'tis doubly right---to Rome, away ;

Straight let us urge our march---as yet the stars

Ride in their middle watch : We shall with ease

Reach it by dawn.

CORIOLANUS.

Yes, we have time---too much !

Six tedious hours 'till morn---But, let's away !

My soul on fire anticipates the dawn.

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

CORIO LANUS, TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, TITUS, *with a crowd of Volscian officers.*

CORIO LANUS.

NO more----I merit not this lavish praise.
True, we have driven the Roman legions back,
Defeated and disgrac'd---but what is this?
Nothing, ye Volsci, nothing yet is done.
Come on, my brave companions of the war!
Come, let us finish, at one mighty stroke,
The toil of labouring fate---We will, or perish!
While, noble Tullus, you protect the camp,
I, with my troops, all men of chosen valour,
And well approv'd to-day, will storm the city.

TITUS.

Beneath thy animating conduct, Marcius,
What can the Volscian valour not perform?
Thy very sight and voice subdues the Romans.
When, lifting up your helm, you shew'd your face,
That like a comet glar'd destruction on 'em,
I saw their bravest veterans fly before thee.
Their ancient spirit has with thee forsook them,
And ruin hangs o'er yon devoted walls.

Enter an Officer, who addresses Coriolanus.

Officer.

My lord, a herald is arriv'd from Rome,
To say a deputation from the senate,
Attended by the ministers of heaven,
A venerable train of priests and flamens
Is on the way, address'd to you.

CORIO LANUS.

To me!

What can this message mean?

What! do they think me such a milky boy,

To pay my vengeance with a few soft words?
Come, fellow soldiers, Tullus, come, and see,
If I betray the honours you have done me.

[*Exeunt all but Tullus and Volusius.*]

VOLUSIUS.

Are we not, Tullus, failing in our duty
Not to attend our general?

TULLUS.

How! what say'st thou?

VOLUSIUS.

Methought my lord his parting orders were,
We should attend the triumph now preparing
O'er all his foes at once——Romans and Volsci!
Come, we shall give offence.

TULLUS.

Of this no more.

I pray thee spare thy bitter irony.

VOLUSIUS.

Shall I then speak without disguise?

TULLUS.

Speak out:

With all the honest bluntness of a friend.

Think'st thou I fear the truth?

VOLUSIUS.

Then, Tullus, know,

Thou art no more the general of the Volsci.

Thou hast, by this thy generous weakness, sunk

Thyself into a private man of Antium.

Yes, thou hast taken from thy laurel'd brow

The well-earn'd trophies of thy toils and perils,

Thy springing hopes, the fairest ever budded,

And heap'd them on a man too proud before.

TULLUS.

He bears it high.

VOLUSIUS.

Death, and perdition! High!

With uncontroul'd command!---You see already,

He will not be encumber'd with the fetters

Of our advice. He speaks his sovereign will;
 On every hand he issues out his orders,
 As to his natural slaves.---For you, my lord,
 He has, I think, confin'd you to your camp,
 There in inglorious indolence to languish;
 While he, beneath your blasted eye, shall reap
 The harvest of your honour.

TULLUS.

No, Volusius,
 Whatever honour shall by him be gain'd
 Reverts to me, from whose superior bounty
 He drew the means of all his glorious deeds.
 This mighty chief, this conqueror of Rome
 Is but my creature—

VOLUSIUS.

Wretched, self-delusion;
 Confusion! there it is! there lurks the sting
 Of our dishonour! while this Marcius leads
 The Roman armies, ours are driven before him.
 Behold he changes sides; when with him changes
 The fortune of the war. Strait they grow Volsci,
 And we victorious Romans---such, no doubt,
 Such is his secret boast.—Ay, this vile brand,
 Success itself will fix for ever on us;
 And, Tullus, thou, 'tis thou must answer for it.

TULLUS. [*Aside*]

His words are daggers to my Heart; I feel
 Their truth! but am asham'd to own my folly.

VOLUSIUS.

O shame! O infamy! the thought consumes me,
 It scalds my eyes with tears, to see a Roman
 Borne on our shoulders to immortal fame:
 Just in the happy moment that decided
 The long dispute of ages, that for which
 Our generous ancestors had toil'd and bled,
 To see him then step in and steal our glory!
 O that we first had perish'd all! a people,
 Who cannot find in their own proper force

Their

Their own protection, are not worth the saving.

TULLUS.

It must have way ! I will no more suppress it—
 Know, then, my rough old friend, no less than thee
 His conduct stings me, and upbraids my folly.
 I wake as from a dream. What demon mov'd me?
 What doating generosity ? His woes ?
 Was it his woes ! to see the brave reduc'd
 To trust his mortal foe ? perhaps, a little
 That work'd within my bosom---but, Volusius,
 That was not all---I will to thee confess
 The weakness of my heart---Yes, it was pride,
 The dazzling pride to see my rival warrior,
 The mighty Coriolanus, bend his soul,
 His haughty soul, to sue for my protection.
 Protection said I ? Were it that alone,
 I had been base to have refus'd him that,
 To have refus'd him ought a gallant foe
 Owes to a gallant foe.--But to exalt him
 To the same level, nay above myself ;
 To yield him the command of half my troops,
 The choicest acting half—That, that was madness !
 Was weak, was mean, unworthy of a man !—

VOLUSIUS.

I scorn to flatter thee—It was indeed.

TULLUS.

Curse on the slave Galesus ! Soothing, he
 Seiz'd the fond moment of infatuation,
 And clinch'd the chains my generous folly forg'd.
 How shall I from this labyrinth escape ?
 Must it then be ! What cruel genius dooms me,
 In war or peace to creep beneath his fortune ?

VOLUSIUS.

That genius is thy self. If thou canst bear
 The very thought of stooping to this Roman,
 Thou from that moment art his vassal, Tullus ;
 By that thou dost acknowledge, parent nature
 Has form'd him thy superior. But if fix'd

Upon the base of manly resolution,
 Thou sayst — I will be free! I will command!
 I and my country! then — O never doubt it —
 We shall find means to crush this vain intruder;
 Even I my self — this hand —
 Nay, hear me, Tullus,
 'Tis not yet come to that, that last resource.
 I do not say we should employ the dagger,
 While other better means are in our power.

TULLUS.

No, my Volufius, fortune will not drive us,
 Or I am much deceiv'd, to that extreme:
 We shall not want the strongest, fairest plea,
 To give a solemn sanction to his fate.
 He will betray himself. Whate'er his rage
 Of passion talks, a weakness for his country
 Sticks in his soul, and he is still a Roman.
 Soon shall we see him tempted to the brink
 Of this sure precipice——Then down at once,
 Without remorse, we hurl him to perdition.
 But hark! The trumpet calls us to a scene
 I should detest, if not from hope we thence
 May gather matter to mature our purpose.

SCENE *changes to* ROME.

Enter MENENIUS, MINUCIUS *and* Senators, *of one*
side; of the other, the two Tribunes, SICINIUS *and*
 BRUTUS.

MINUCIUS.

Oh! you have made good work!

Tribunes.

What news? what news?

MENENIUS.

You have help to ravish your own daughters, and
 To melt the city-leads upon your pates;
 To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses.

BRU-

BRUTUS.

Pray now the news?

MENENIUS.

Yes, you have made good work,
You and your apron-men; that stood so much
Upon the voice of occupation, and
The breath of garlick-eaters.

MINUCIUS.

He'll shake your Rome about your ears.

MENENIUS.

As Hercules did shake down mellow fruit.
You have made fair work!

SICINIUS.

We're all undone, unless
The noble man have mercy.

MINUCIUS.

Mercy, yes, you
Deserve such mercy of him, as the wolf
Does of the shepherd. You have brought on Rome
A trembling, such as she never knew before,
So incapable of help.

Tribunes.

Say not we brought it.

MENENIUS.

How? was it we? we lov'd him; but like beasts,
And coward nobles, gave way to your clusters,
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

MINUCIUS.

But I fear,
They'll roar him in again. All our hope now
Lyes in Cominius, and the reverend fathers,
Who are gone to implore his mercy.

Enter Citizens.

MENENIUS.

Here come the clusters — You are they
That made the air unwholsome, when you cast
Your

Your stinking, greasy caps, in hooting
 Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming,
 And not a hair upon a souldier's head,
 Which will not prove a whip: as many coxcombs,
 As you threw caps up, will he tumble down,
 And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter,
 If he should burn us all into a coal,
 We have deserv'd it.

Omnes.

Faith we hear fearful news;
 Sad news, sad news.

First Citizen.

For mine own part,
 When I said banish him; I said 'twas pity.

Second Citizen.

And so did I.

Third Citizen.

And so did I; and to say the truth, so did every one
 of us, that we did, we did for the best; and tho' we
 willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was
 against our will.

MINUCIUS.

Y'are goodly things? You, voices!
 But here's Cominius, return'd from the deputation.
 His looks forebode ill tidings,

Enter COMINIUS and others.

Have you prevail'd? Will he have mercy?
 Has Rome any hopes?

COMINIUS.

No, we're returned
 Disgrac'd, our suit rejected, and the majesty
 Of Rome insulted, trampled under foot.

MENENIUS.

So! you have made good work, you and your cry.

MINUCIUS.

How did he receive you?

COMINI-

COMINIUS.

He would not seem to know me.

MENENIUS.

Do you hear that ?

COMINIUS.

Yet one time he did call me by my name :
I urg'd our old acquaintance, and the drops
That we have bled together. Coriolanus
He would not answer to ; forbad all names :
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,
'Till he had forg'd himself a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome.

MENENIUS.

Why, so ; you've made good work :
A pair of tribunes, that have rack'd for Rome,
To make coals cheap ; you will deserve a memory.

COMINIUS.

I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon
When it was least expected. He reply'd,
It was a bare petition of a state
To one whom they had punish'd.

MENENIUS.

Very well, could he say less ?

COMINIUS.

I offer'd to awaken his regard
For's private friends. His answer to me was,
He could not stay to pick them in a pile
Of noisom musty chaff. He said, 'twas folly,
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt,
And still to nose th' offence.

MENENIUS.

For one poor grain or two !
I'm one of those : his mother, wife, his child,
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains ;
You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt
Above the moon. We must be burnt for you.

SICINIUS.

Nay, pray be patient, do not upbraid us

With

60 CORIOLANUS: Or,

With our distress—But, sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, your good tongue,
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

MENENIUS.

No, I'll not meddle.

BRUTUS.

Pray you go to him.

COMINIUS.

He'll never hear him.

SICINIUS.

Not?

COMINIUS.

I tell you he does sit in gold, his eye
Red as 'twould burn Rome! and his injury
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him,
'Twas very faintly he said, Rise: dismiss'd me
Thus, with his speechless hand. What he would do,
He sent in writing after; what he would not,
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions.
So that all hope is vain, unless his mother,
And wife, who (as I hear) mean to solicit him
For mercy to his country, should succeed.

MENENIUS.

See you yond coin of the Capitol, yond corner-stone?

SICINIUS.

Why what of that?

MENENIUS.

If it be possible for you to displace it with your little
finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, espe-
cially his mother, may prevail with him.

SICINIUS.

He lov'd her dearly.

MENENIUS.

Yes, but he no more remembers his mother now,
than an eight-years-old horse. I warrant the tartness
of his face sours ripe grapes. Mark what mercy his
mother shall bring from him; there is no more mercy
in

In him than there is milk in a male tyger; that shall our poor city find; and all this is 'long of you. There is no hope left. Our throats are sentenc'd, and stay upon execution.

First Plebeian.

O doleful tidings!

Second Plebeian.

O woeful day!

Third Plebeian.

What will become of us?

First Plebeian.

Our wives and children!

Second Plebeian.

What shall we do?

Third Plebeian.

Let us seize the two tribunes that did banish him, and throw them down the Tarpeian rock.

All.

Agreed, agreed.

First Plebeian.

It will be the best means to paxify Coriolanus.

All.

Aye, aye, seize them.

SICINIUS and BRUTUS.

O, good Menenius, save us, stand our friend.

MENENIUS.

Not I; they may hang, drown, burn, or break your worthless necks from the rock, 'tis all one to me.

[Exit Menenius.]

All.

Away with them, away with them.

COMINIUS.

Hear me, my fellow-citizens.

First Plebeian.

Aye, hear the good Cominius.

All.

Hear him, hear him. Silence.

COMI-

COMINIUS.

Good citizens, lay by this desp'rate course,
At least, suspend your angers, 'till you hear
How the entreaties of his mother, wife,
And our most noble matrons work upon him.
They yet may bring us peace.

First Plebeian.

So we will.

Second Plebeian.

We'll stay till their return.

Third Plebeian.

But if they don't bring back good news, it shall be
ill news for you.

First Plebeian.

Yes, if they don't, we'll send their heads next to peti-
tion for us to Coriolanus.

Third Plebeian.

Aye, and they'll do't better off their shoulders than on.

Second Plebeian.

So they will. Come secure them; away, away.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE changes to the Volscian Camp.

TULLUS alone.

What is the mind of man? A restless scene
Of vanity and weakness; shifting still,
As shift the lights of our uncertain knowledge;
Or as the various gale of passion breathes.
None ever thought himself more deeply founded
On what is right, nor felt a nobler ardor
Than I, when I invested Caius Marcius
With this ill-judg'd command. Now it appears
Distraction, folly, monst'rous folly, meanness!
And down I plunge, betray'd even by my virtue,
From gulph to gulph, from shame to deeper shame.

Enter VOLUSIUS hastily.

Ha! Volusius,

Thy looks declare some message of importance.

VOLUSIUS.

Tullus, they do—I was to find out Marcius;
To him a second deputation comes;
His mother and his wife, with a long train
Of all the noblest ladies Rome can boast,
In mourning habits clad, approach our camp;
Preceded by a herald, to demand
Another audience of him.
By heaven 'tis well.

TULLUS.

How? what is well? That humbled Rome once more
Shall deck him with the trophies of our arms?

VOLUSIUS.

And hop'st thou nothing from this blest event?
They who have often blasted mighty heroes,
Who oft have stole into the firmest hearts,
And melted them to folly: they, my friend,
Will do what wisdom never could effect.

TULLUS.

Thinkst thou the prayers and tears of wailing women
Can shake the man, who with such cold disdain
Stood firm against those venerable consuls,
And spurn'd the genius of his kneeling country?

VOLUSIUS.

It was his pride alone that made him ours,
That passion kept him firm; the flattering charm
Of humbling those who in their persons bore
The whole collected majesty of Rome.
These women are no proper objects for it:
He cannot triumph o'er his wife and mother.
On this my hopes are founded, that these women
May by their gentler influence subdue him.

TULLUS.

Whate'er th' event, he shall no longer here,
As wave his passions, dictate peace, or war.
Whether his stubborn soul maintains it's firmness,
Or yields to female prayers, the Volscian honour
Will be alike betray'd. If Rome prevails,

He

He stops our conquering arms from her destruction ;
 If he rejects her suit, he reigns our tyrant.
 But, by th' immortal Gods ! His short-liv'd empire
 Shall never see yon radiant sun descend.

VOLUSIUS.

Blest be those Gods that have at last inspir'd thee
 With resolution equal to thy cause,
 The cause of liberty !

TULLUS.

Be sure, Volusius,
 If that should happen which thy hopes portend ;
 Should he by nature tam'd, disarm'd by love,
 Respite the Roman doom—He seals his own :
 By Heaven he dies.

VOLUSIUS.

Let me embrace thee,
 Tullus, my sword
 Here claims to be employ'd—Nor mine alone—
 There are some worthy Volsci still remaining,
 Who think with us, and pine beneath the laurels
 A Roman chief bestows.

TULLUS.

Go, find them strait,
 And bring them to the space before his tent ;
 'Tis there he will receive his deputation.
 Then if he sinks beneath these women's prayers---
 Or if he does not---But, Volusius, wait,
 I give thee strictest charge to wait my signal.
 Perhaps I may find means to free the Volsci
 Without his blood. If not---we will be free.

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE a Camp with Volscian Soldiers, as before.

*Enter CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, GALESUS, VOLUSIUS;
The Roman Ladies advance slowly, with VETURIA
and VOLUMNIA, all clad in mourning. CORIOLANUS
sits on his tribunal; but seeing them, advances, and
goes hastily to embrace his mother.*

CORIOLANUS.

Lower your fasces, Liſtors—
O Veturia!
Thou beſt of parents!

VETURIA.

Coriolanus, ſtop.

Whom am I to embrace? a ſon, or foe
Say, in what light am I regarded here?
Thy mother, or thy captive?

CORIOLANUS.

Juſtly, madam,
You check my fondneſs, that, by nature hurry'd.
Forgot, I was the general of the Volſci,
And you a deputy from hoſtile Rome.

[He goes back to his former ſtation.]

I hear you with reſpect. Speak your commiſſion.

VETURIA.

Think not I come a deputy from Rome.
Rome, once rejected, ſcorns a ſecond ſuit.
You have already heard whate'er the tongue
Of eloquence can plead, whate'er the wiſdom
Of ſacred age, the dignity of ſenates,
And virtue can enforce. Behold me here
Sent by the ſhades of your immortal fathers,
Sent by the genius of the Marcian line,

F

Com-

Commission'd by my own maternal heart,
 To try the soft, yet stronger powers of nature ;
 Thus authoriz'd, I ask, nay, claim a peace,
 On equal, fair, and honourable terms,
 'To thee, to Rome, and to the Volscian people.
 Grant it, my son ! Thy mother begs it of thee ;
 Thy wife, the best, the kindest of her sex,
 And these illustrious matrons, who have sooth'd
 The gloomy hours thou hast been absent from us.
 We, by whate'er is great and good in nature,
 By every duty, by the Gods, conjure thee,
 To grant us peace ! and turn on other foes
 Thy arms, where thou may'st purchase virtuous glory.

CORIOLANUS.

I should, Veturia, break those holy bonds
 That hold the wide republic of mankind,
 Society, together ; I should grow
 A wretch unworthy to be call'd thy son ;
 I should, with my Volumnia's fair esteem,
 Forfeit her love ; these matrons would despise me—
 Could I betray the Volscian cause, thus trusted,
 Thus recommended to me——no, my mother,]
 You cannot sure, you cannot ask it of me !

VETURIA.

And does my son so little know me ? Me !
 Who took such care to form his tender years,
 Left to my conduct by his dying father ?
 Have I so ill deserv'd that trust ? Alas !
 Am I so low in thy esteem, that thou
 Should'st e'er imagine I could urge a part
 Which in the least might stain the Marcian honour ?
 No, let me perish rather ! perish all !
 Life has no charms compar'd to spotless glory !
 I only ask, thou woud'st forbid thy troops
 To waste our lands, and to assault yon city,
 'Till time be giv'n for mild and righteous measures.
 Grant us but one year's truce : Mean while thou may'st,
 With honour and advantage to both nations,

Betwixt us mediate a perpetual peace.

CORIOLANUS.

Alas! my mother! That were granting all.

VETURIA.

Canst thou refuse me such a just petition,
The first request thy mother ever made thee?
Canst thou to her intreaties, prayers, and tears,
Prefer a savage obstinate revenge?
Have love and nature lost all power within thee?

CORIOLANUS.

No---in my heart they reign as strong as ever.
Come, I conjure you, quit ungrateful Rome,
Come, and complete my happiness at Antium,
You, and my dear Volumnia—There, Veturia,
There you shall see with what respect the Volsci
Will treat the wife and mother of their general.

VETURIA.

Treat me thyself with more respect, my son;
Nor dare to shock my ears with such proposals.
Shall I desert my country, I who come
To plead her cause? Ah no!—A grave in Rome
Would better please me than a throne at Antium.
How hast thou thus forsaken all my precepts?
How hast thou thus forgot thy love to Rome?
O Coriolanus, when with hostile arms,
With fire and sword, you enter'd on our borders,
Did not the fostering air that breathes around us,
Allay thy guilty fury, and instil
A certain native sweetness thro' thy soul?
Did not your heart thus murmur to itself?
“ These walls contain whatever can command
“ Respect from virtue, or is dear to nature,
“ The monuments of piety and valour;
“ The sculptur'd forms, the trophies of my fathers,
“ My household Gods, my mother, wife, and chil-
dren!

CORIOLANUS.

Ah! you seduce me with too tender views!—

These walls contain the most corrupt of men,
A base seditious herd; who trample order,
Distinction, justice, law, beneath their feet,
Insolent foes to worth, the foes of virtue!

VETURIA.

Thou hast not thence a right to lift thy hand
Against the whole community, which forms
Thy ever sacred country---That consists
Not of coeval citizens alone:
It knows no bounds; it has a retrospect
To ages past; it looks on those to come;
And grasps of all the general worth and virtue:
Suppose, my son, that I to thee had been
A harsh obdurate parent, even unjust;
How wou'd the monstrous thought with horror strike
thee,

Of plunging, from revenge, thy raging steel
Into her breast who nurs'd thy infant years!

CORIOLANUS.

Rome is no more! that Rome which nurs'd my youth;
That Rome, conducted by patrician virtue,
She is no more! my sword shall now chastise
These sons of pride and dirt! her upstart tyrants!
Who have debas'd the noblest state on earth
Into a sordid democratic faction;
Why will my mother join her cause to theirs?

VETURIA.

Forbid it, Jove! that I should e'er distinguish
My interest from the general cause of Rome;
Or live to see a foreign hostile arm
Reform th' abuses of our land of freedom.

[Pausing.

But 'tis in vain, I find, to reason more.
Is there no way to reach thy filial heart,
Once fam'd as much for piety as courage?
Oft hast thou justly triumph'd, Coriolanus;
Now yield one triumph to thy widow'd mother;
And send me back amidst the loud acclaims,

The ROMAN MATRON. 69

The grateful transports of deliver'd Rome,
The happiest far, the most renown'd of women!

CORIO LANUS.

Why, why, Veturia, wilt thou plead in vain?

TULLUS [*aside to Volufius.*]

See, see, Volufius, how the strong emotions.
Of powerful nature shake his inmost soul!
See how they tear him---If he long resists them,
He is a God, or something worse than man.

VETURIA.

O Marcius, Marcius! canst thou treat me thus?
Canst thou complain of Rome's ingratitude,
Yet be to me so cruelly ungrateful?
To me! who anxious rear'd thy youth to glory?
Whose only joy these many years has been,
To boast that Coriolanus was my son?
And dost thou then renounce me for thy mother?
Spurn me before these chiefs, before those soldiers,
That weep thy stubborn cruelty? Art thou
The hardest man to me in this assembly?
Look at me! speak!

[*Pausing, during which he appears in great agitation.*]

Still dost thou turn away?

Inexorable? silent? --- Then, behold me,
Behold thy mother, at whose feet thou oft
Hast kneel'd with fondness, kneeling now at thine,
Wetting thy stern tribunal with her tears.

CORIO LANUS.

Veturia, rise; I cannot see thee thus. [*Raises her.*]

It is a sight uncomely to behold
My mother at my feet, and that to urge
A suit, relentless honour must refuse.

VOLUMNIA [*advancing.*]

Since, Coriolanus, thou dost still retain,
In spite of all thy mother now has pleaded,
Thy dreadful purpose, ah! how much in vain
Were it for me to join my supplications!

The voice of thy Volumnia, once so pleasing,
 How shall it hope to touch the husband's heart,
 When proof against the tears of such a parent?
 I dare not urge what to thy mother thou
 So firmly hast deny'd---But I must weep---
 Must weep, if not thy harsh severity,
 At least thy situation. O permit me [*Taking his hand.*
 To shed my gushing tears upon thy hand!
 To press it with the cordial lips of love!
 And take my last farewell!

CORIOLANUS.

Yet, yet, my soul,
 Be firm, and persevere---

VOLUMNIA.

Ah, Coriolanus!
 Is then this hand, this hand to me devoted,
 The pledge of nuptial love, that has so long
 Protected, bless'd, and shelter'd us with kindness,
 Now lifted up against us? yet I love it,
 And, with submissive veneration, bow
 Beneath th' affliction which it heaps upon us.
 But oh! what nobler transports would it give thee!
 What joy beyond expression! could'st thou once
 Surmount the furious storm of fierce revenge,
 And yield thee to the charms of love and mercy.
 Oh make the glorious trial!

CORIOLANUS.

Mother! wife!
 Are all the powers of nature leagu'd against me?
 I cannot!-- will not!--Leave me, my Volumnia!

VOLUMNIA.

Well, I obey---How bitter thus to part!
 Upon such terms to part!---perhaps, for ever!---
 But tell me, ere I hence unroot my feet,
 When to my lonely home I shall return,
 What from their father, to our little slaves,
 Unconscious of the shame to which you doom them,
 What shall I say? [*Pausing, he highly agitated.*

Nay

Nay---tell me, Coriolanus!

CORIO-
LANUS.

Tell thee! what shall I tell thee? See these tears!
These tears will tell thee what exceeds the pow'r
Of words to speak, what'er the son, the husband,
And father, in one complicated pang,
Can feel---But leave me;---ev'n in pity leave me!
Cease, cease, to torture me, my dear Volumnia!
You only tear my heart; but cannot shake it:
For by th' immortal Gods, the dread avengers
Of broken faith!---

VOLUMNIA. [*Kneeling.*]

Oh swear not, Coriolanus!
Oh vow not our destruction!

VETURIA.

Daughter, rise,
Let us no more before the Volscian people
Expose ourselves a spectacle of shame.
It is in vain we strive to melt a breast,
That, to the best affections nature gives us
Prefers the worst---Hear me, proud man, I have
A heart as stout as thine. I came not hither
To be sent back rejected, baffled, sham'd,
Hateful to Rome, because I am thy mother:
A Roman Matron knows, in such extremes,
What part to take---And thus I came provided.

[*Drawing forth a conceal'd dagger.*]

Go! barbarous son! go! double parricide!
Rush o'er my corse to thy belov'd revenge!
Tread on the bleeding breast of her to whom
Thou ow'st thy life---Lo, thy first victim!

CORIO-
LANUS.

Ha! [*Seizing her hand.*]
What do'st thou mean?

VETURIA.

To die, while Rome is free,
To seize the moment e're thou art her tyrant.

CORIOLANUS.

Oh use thy pow'r more justly ! set not thus
My treach'rous heart in arms against my reason,
Here ! here ! thy dagger will be well employ'd ;
Strike here, and reconcile my fighting duties.

VETURIA.

Off---set me free !--think'st thou that grasp which binds
My feeble hand, can fetter too my will ?
No, my proud son ! thou can'st not make me live,
If Rome must fall !---No pow'r on earth can do it !

CORIOLANUS.

Pity me, generous Volsci !---You are men !---
Must it then be ?---Confusion ! Do I yield ?
What is it ? is it weakness ? is it virtue ?---
Well ! ---

VETURIA.

What ? Speak !

CORIOLANUS.

O, no ! ---

VETURIA.

Nay, if thou yieldest, yield like Coriolanus ;
And what thou do'st, do nobly !

CORIOLANUS.

There ! --- 'Tis done ! *[Quitting her band.*
Thine is the triumph, nature !

[To Veturia, in a low tone of voice.

Ah, Veturia !

Rome by thy aid is sav'd --- But thy son lost.

VETURIA.

He never can be lost, who saves his country.

CORIOLANUS.

Ye matrons !

[Turning to the Roman ladies.

Guardians of the Roman safety,

You to the senate may report this answer,

We grant the truce you ask, but on these terms :

That Rome, mean time, shall to a peace agree,

Fair, equal, just, and such as may secure

The

The ROMAN MATRON. 73

The safety, rights, and honour of the Volsci.

Volsci, we raise the siege. Go, and prepare,

[To the troops.]

By the first dawn, for your return to Antium.

[As the troops retire, and Coriolanus turns to the Roman ladies, Tullus to Volusius aside.]

TULLUS.

'Tis as as we wish'd, Volusius, to your station——

But mark me well——'Till thou shalt hear my call,

I charge thee not to stir. One offer more

My honour bids me make to this proud man,

Before we strike the blow—If he rejects it,

His blood be on his head.

VOLUSIUS.

Well! I obey you.

[Goes out.]

CORIOANUS.

Be it thy care, Galesius, that a safeguard

Attend these noble matrons back to Rome.

[Exeunt all but Coriolanus and Tullus.]

I plainly, Tullus, by your looks, discern

You disapprove my conduct.

TULLUS.

Caius Marcius,

I mean not to assail thee with the clamour

Of loud reproaches, and the war of words;

But pride apart, and all that can pervert

The light of steady reason, here to make

A candid fair proposal.

CORIOANUS.

Speak. I hear thee.

TULLUS.

I need not tell thee, that I have perform'd

My utmost promise. Thou hast been protected;

Hast had thy amplest, most ambitious wish:

Thy wounded pride is heal'd, thy dear revenge

Completely sated; and, to crown thy fortune,

At the same time, thy peace with Rome restor'd.

Thou art no more a Volscian, but a Roman.

Return,

Return, return; thy duty calls upon thee,
Still to protect the city thou hast sav'd :
It still may be in danger from our arms.

CORIO LANUS.

Insolent man ! Is this thy fair proposal ?

TULLUS.

Be patient—Hear me speak—I have already
From Rome protected thee : now from the Volsci,
From their just vengeance, I will still protect thee.
Retire, I will take care thou may'st with safety.

CORIO LANUS.

With safety ! — Gods ! — And think'st thou,
Coriolanus

Will stoop to thee for safety ? No, my safeguard
Is in my self, a bosom void of blame,
And the great Gods, protectors of the just. —
O 'tis an act of cowardice and baseness,
To seize the very time my hands are fetter'd,
By the strong chain of former obligations,
The safe, sure moment to insult me. — Gods !
Were I now free, as on that day I was,
When at Corioli I tam'd thy pride,
This had not been.

TULLUS.

Thou speak'st the truth : it had not !
O for that time again ! Propitious Gods—
If you will bless me, grant it ! know, for that,
For that dear purpose, I have now propos'd
Thou should'st return — I pray thee, Marcius, do it !
And we shall meet again on nobler terms.

CORIO LANUS.

When to the Volsci I have clear'd my faith,
Doubt not, I shall find means to meet thee nobly.
We then our generous quarrel may decide
In the bright front of some embattled field,
And not in private brawls, like fierce barbarians.

TULLUS.

Thou can'st not hope acquittal from the Volsci. —

CORI-

CORIO LANUS.

I do. — nay, more, expect their approbation,
Their thanks! I will obtain them such a peace
As thou durst never ask; a perfect union
Of their whole nation with imperial Rome
In all her privileges, all her rights.
By the just Gods, I will! What would'st thou more?

TULLUS.

What would I more! Proud Roman, this I would;
Fire the curst forest where these Roman wolves
Haunt and infest their nobler neighbours round them;
Extirpate from the bosom of this land
A false perfidious people, who, beneath
The mask of freedom, are a combination
Against the liberty of human kind,
The genuine seed of outlaws and of robbers.

CORIO LANUS.

The seed of Gods! — 'Tis not for thee, vain boaster!
'Tis not for such as thou, so often spar'd
By her victorious sword, to talk of Rome,
But with respect and awful veneration.
Whate'er her blots, whate'er her giddy factions,
There is more virtue in one single page
Of Roman story, than your Volscian annals
Can boast thro' all your creeping dark duration.

TULLUS.

I thank thy rage. This full displays the traitor.

CORIO LANUS.

Ha! Traitor!

TULLUS.

First, to thy own country, traitor!
And traitor, now, to mine.
Who hast perfidiously,
Basely betray'd your trust, and given up,
For certain drops of salt, our city, Rome;
I say our city, to your wife and mother;
Breaking your oath and resolution, like
A twist of rotten filk; never admitting

Counsel

Counsel o' the war; but at your nurse's tears
 You whin'd, and roar'd away your victory,
 That pages blush'd at you, and men of heart
 Look'd wond'ring each at other.

CORIO LANUS.

Hear'st thou, Mars!

TULLUS.

Name not the God, thou boy of tears!

CORIO LANUS.

Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart
 Too great for what contains it. Boy! O slave!
 If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,
 That like an eagle in a dove-coat, I
 Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli.
 Alone I did it. Boy!—But let us part ———
 Lest my rash hand should do a hasty deed,
 My cooler thought forbids.

TULLUS.

Begone — Return ———
 To head the Roman troops. I grant thee quittance,
 Full and complete, of all those obligations,
 Thou hast so oft insultingly complain'd
 Fetter'd thy hands. They now are free. I court
 The worst thy hand can do; whilst thou from me
 Hast nothing to expect, but sore destruction.
 Quit then this hostile camp. Once more I tell thee,
 Thou art not here one single hour in safety.

CORIO LANUS.

Think'st thou to fright me hence?

TULLUS.

Thou wilt not then?
 Thou wilt not take the safety which I offer.

CORIO LANUS.

'Till have clear'd my honour in your council,
 And prov'd before them all, to thy confusion,
 The falshood of thy charge; as soon in battle
 I would before thee fly, and howl for mercy,
 As quit the station they have here assign'd me.

TULLUS.

TULLUS.

Volusius! ho!

Enter VOLUSIUS and Conspirators, with their swords drawn.

Seize, and secure the traitor.

CORIOLANUS.

Who dares [Laying his hand on his sword.
Approach me, dies!

VOLUSIUS.

Die thou!

[As Coriolanus draws his sword, Volusius and the rest rush upon him and stab him. Tullus stands, without drawing.

CORIOLANUS.

Off! — Villains. [Endeavours to free himself, falls.
Oh murdering slaves! assassinating cowards. [Dies.

Enter GALESUS, the Volscian states, officers and friends of CORIOLANUS, and TITUS, with a large band of soldiers, &c.

GALESUS.

Are we a nation rul'd by laws, or fury?

How! whence this tumult?

Gods! what do I see?

The noble Marcius slain!

TULLUS.

You see a traitor

Punish'd as he deserv'd, the Roman yoke,

That thrall'd us, broken, and the Volsci free.

GALESUS.

Hear me, great Jove! Hear all you injur'd powers
Of friendship, hospitality and faith!

By that heroic blood, which from the ground

Reeking to you for vengeance cries, I swear!

This impious breach of your eternal laws,

This daring outrage of the Volscian honour,

Shall find in me a rigorous avenger!

On

On the same earth, polluted by their crime,
I will not live with these unpunish'd ruffians.

TULLUS.

My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow.
Tho' he has been our foe,
Yet as a soldier, brave, unmatch'd in arms,
With martial pomp, let these his sacred reliques
Be consecrate to the dread god of war,
Whose favourite he liv'd. His noble memory,
His deathless fame remain; but be his faults,
Be our resentments bury'd with his dust.

[GALESIUS *standing over the body of CORIOLANUS,*
after a short pause,

Ye noble Volscians,
And ye, brave soldiers, see an awful scene,
Demanding serious, solemn meditation.
This man was once the glory of his age,
Disinterested, just, with every virtue
Of civil life adorn'd, in arms unequal'd.
His only blot was this; that, much provok'd,
He rais'd his vengeful arm against his country.
And lo! the righteous gods have now chastis'd him,
Even by the hands of those for whom he fought.
Whatever private views and passions plead,
No cause can justify so black a deed.
Then be this truth the star by which we steer,
Above our selves our country should be dear.

End of the FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

WELL! gentlemen! and are you still so vain
To treat our sex with arrogant disdain,
And think, to you alone, by partial Heav'n,
Superior sense and sovereign pow'r are giv'n,
When in the story told to-night, you find,
With what a boundless sway we rule the mind;
And, by a few soft words of ours, with ease,
Can turn the proudest hearts just where we please?
If an old mother had such pow'rful charms, —
To stop a stubborn Roman's conqu'ring arms, —
Soldiers and statesmen of these days, with you,
What, think you, would a fair young mistress do?
If with my grave discourse, and wrinkled face,
I thus could bring a hero to disgrace,
How absolutely may I hope to reign
Now I am turn'd to my own shape again?
However, I will use my empire well;
And if I have a certain magic spell,
Or in my tongue, or wit, or shape, or eyes,
Which can subdue the strong, and fool the wise,
Be not alarm'd: I will not interfere
In state-affairs, nor undertake to steer
The helm of government — as we are told,
Those female politicians did of old;
Such dangerous heights I never wish'd to climb —
Thank Heav'n! I better can employ my time —
Ask you, to what my pow'r I shall apply?
To make my subjects blest, is my reply.
My purposes are gracious all, and kind.
Some may be told — and some may be divid'd.
I lay no tax but what you well may bear,
I bind no chains but what you wish to wear.
Then in return for such an easy sway,
With hearts and hands your willing homage pay,
Applaud Veturia, and protect the play.

But hold—Gads-me, I had forgotten quite,
You must attend me here — on the next night.

F I N I S.



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